Archival Resources of the Virginias 2024 Annual Report

March 1, 2025

Welcome to the 2024 annual report of Archival Resources of the Virginias (ARVAS) (https://arvasarchive.org). This organization promotes our members and provides online access to the finding aids for their collections. This free volunteer organization manages the website and the finding aid database; provides technology support through tutorials, person-to-person communication, and assistance; and actively reaches out to current and potential members about our work and events of interest to the membership.

2024 Facts about ARVAS

ARVAS is a free, volunteer-run, two-state resource for Virginia and West Virginia memory organizations' content. Begun as an idea in 1997, ARVAS has grown ever more robust in membership and provides access to primary sources from across the area. A few facts and figures:

Membership

New Members
York County Public Library

Total Current Member Institutions
55

Statistics

Total Finding Aids
45,747

New Finding Aids Added in 2024
937

Analytics from organizational site (arvasarchive.org)
This is data for the main ARVAS landing page, with information and resources for users and members. It includes a search box for the database.
- 5,767 visitors
- 13,427 pageviews

- 49 countries represented in visits to the site
- Top five countries represented: United States, China, United Kingdom, Canada, Portugal

Members submitting finding aids through ArchivesSpace Harvest
18

Finding aids contributed through DACS form
6

2024 Recap

Outreach and Technology Team highlights

We remain grateful for the support of UVA, who serves as our technical home, and for all their support this year in helping us resolve member issues. As we work on improving communication about technology, we've continued exploring options. This past year, we solicited feedback from our Governance team about the priorities for potential changes and revisited the spreadsheet we use to track issues and larger improvement requests. We also recruited a pool of volunteers to help with ad hoc outreach and technology initiatives. We hope that some of those volunteers will be able to aid in outreach as we move forward with our plan for ARVAS to host a community archives directory. The form and call for participation in this were sent out at the end of 2024, and this is a major goal for 2025.

Social Media Team highlights

In February, ARVAS revitalized its social media presence by restarting the Social Media team. The new approach rolled out in April, with twice weekly social media posts replacing the automated RSS feed of finding aids. The team posted on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, which we added as a third platform. Social Media shared the posts, events, and digital and live exhibits from a variety of ARVAS members, as well as highlighting newly added finding aids. Engagement has been slow to build, although views and impressions are increasing.

For 2025, the Social Media team plans to diversify the formats of posts, increase adding to stories, and incorporate some original content. The Social Media team would like to consider discontinuing the Twitter account and focusing attention on Facebook and Instagram.

Adoption of Principles of Collaboration v2

Late in 2023, the ARVAS Executive Team updated the Principles. The changes to the election and leadership sections were made to reflect actual practices. The Governance Team accepted the updated version of the Principles in February 2024. A link to the entire document is available on the [ARVAS website](#).

Addition of statement about language in finding aids

ARVAS serves as an aggregator of content from more than 50 institutions. As an aggregator, we do not have control over the language used in finding aids originating from these various institutions. In order to protect ARVAS, as well as notify the user of potentially harmful language, we drafted and implemented a content warning statement that has been added to the website.

The text is as follows:

> Content Warning
> ARVAS is an aggregator of archival resources. ARVAS does not have control of the descriptive language used in our members' finding aids. Finding aids may contain historical terms and phrases, reflecting the shared attitudes and values of the community from which they were collected, but are offensive to modern readers. These include demeaning and dehumanizing references to race, ethnicity, and nationality; enslaved or free status; physical or mental ability; religion; sex; and sexual orientation and gender identity. Many institutions and organizations are in the process of reviewing and revising their descriptive language, with the intent to describe materials in more humanizing, inclusive, and harm-reductive ways. As members revise their descriptive language, their changes will eventually be reflected in their ARVAS finding aids.

NAFAN

The Building a National Finding Aid Network (NAFAN) project formally wrapped its first main phase in 2023/2024. This phase included a [summary report](#) that was widely distributed in late 2023. The next phase will be finding a technical home for development. At this point, ARVAS's involvement in NAFAN is complete. If future work ramps up, several individuals in ARVAS leadership are interested in participating.

2025 Plans

The administrative goals for the coming year include:
- Webinar in the spring in conjunction with SHRAB to do outreach for new and existing members and community archives
- Continue to create the community archives directory. We have a form ready for launch in early 2025 ahead of the webinar.
- In 2024, we began identifying some changes we'd like to see in a future iteration of ARVAS, and we plan to continue exploring them in the upcoming year.
- Continue to expand the reach of our revitalized social media presence.

Governance Team Leadership for 2025
- Karen King, Library of Virginia, Chair
- Katie Rojas, University of Virginia, Vice Chair

Archival Resources of the Virginias Governance Team 2024

Laura Gilmour Stoner, Chair, Virginia Museum of History and Culture
Karen King, Vice Chair, Library of Virginia
Chrystal Carpenter, Virginia Commonwealth University
Lynn Eaton, George Mason University
Afua Ferdnance, William & Mary
Jay Gaidmore, William & Mary
Lori Hostuttler, West Virginia University
Mary Ann Mason, Library of Virginia
Aaron Purcell, Virginia Tech
Katie Rojas, University of Virginia
Kimberly Sims, Washington and Lee University
Kira Dietz, Technology and Outreach, Virginia Tech
Margaret Turman Kidd, Technology and Outreach, Virginia Commonwealth University